

No 11

*the Divinity of Christ asserted, and the
Censures in the Athanasian Creed con-
sidered.*

A
S E R M O N

Preached at the
VISITATION
Of the Reverend
George Atwood, B.D.
Archdeacon of TAUNTON,
HELD AT
St. Mary Magdalen's in TAUNTON,
On Thursday, June 19. 1746.

By JAMES HURLY, B. A. K
Curate of *Wilton* in *Somersetshire*.

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O X F O R D,

Printed at the THEATRE for JAMES FLETCHER in the
Turl: and Sold by S. BIRT in *Ave-Mary-Lane*, London;
and S. CHAULKLIN in *Taunton*. MDCCXLVII.



JOHN I. I.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

AS we are now convinc'd from wo-
ful experience that heresies were
to arise in the church, it seems
intirely providential that they were
suffer'd to appear so early, when men had an
opportunity of appealing to the apostles them-
selves, for a decision of the case, to the ora-
cle of the Lord, to those who had the mind
of Christ.

History informs us, that before the death
of St. *John* (the youngest and last of all the
apostles,) false teachers arose, even denying
the Lord that bought them. The great my-
stery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh,
gave offence, it seems, in those days, as well
as in ours. Men have probably had too high
an opinion of their natural endowments, and
thought themselves qualifi'd, with their pre-
sent

sent faculties, to penetrate into things unknown to a superior order of Beings; ^a *which things the angels desire to look into.* Hence it came to pass, that the catholic faith was rejected, because the doctrine of God — incarnate was too great for human comprehension. When men had once forsaken the way of truth, it was natural enough for them to fall into different kinds of error. Accordingly, whilst some denied the divinity of Christ, others denied his humanity.

To obviate these heresies, the bishops of *Asia* applied to their great apostle *St. John*: who thereupon wrote his gospel, as is reasonably believed, to give the world satisfaction in this momentous controversy. Here then we may reasonably expect a satisfactory account of what we are to believe of the Son of God; whether he really existed as a divine person with the Father from all eternity, or whether the Redeemer of the world be a Creature only.

St. John begins his gospel with the words of my text; *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.* Here are three terms which require an

^a 1 Peter i. 12.

examination; *the Beginning, the Word, and God*: If we can attain to the true meaning of these terms, we shall see most of the difficulties concerning the doctrine of the Trinity vanish away.

In the Beginning (we shall find) signifies from everlasting: and therefore, when any Being is said to have existed *in the Beginning*, the meaning is the same as if it had been said to have existed from eternity. For as there could be no period of time before the creation, I mean before some creature had a Being; (for we cannot without great absurdity assign any period of time to an eternal Being;) so it is manifest, that as soon as any creature existed, there commenc'd a period, sc. the beginning of time: Whatever Being therefore existed at or before this period, must have existed before all time, that is from all eternity. I here suppose the existence of an eternal God, the Creator of all things visible and invisible; it being needless, in a dispute, where Christians only are concern'd, to prove what no Christian denies.

Perhaps it will be objected, that the Word *beginning* carries a different meaning in the first chapter of *Genesis*, where *Moses* says, *In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth*:

earth: that *beginning* is there restrained to the creation of the world, to a limited Period: and how can we be certain then, that St. *John* understands by it time unlimited, eternal and infinite?

But if we may be assur'd from certain circumstances, that the meaning of an expression is sometimes limited, and confin'd; may we not likewise be assur'd, when no such limitation appears, that the Word is to have it's full force, to be taken in an unlimited, indefinite sense? the bare mention of the creation of the earth, plainly speaks a limitation of time: and so when it is said, *In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth*, it is plain nothing more is said then this; sc. that in, or at, or before the beginning of the world, God interpos'd by his power to create or make the heaven and the earth, and that without this extraordinary interposition, the world would never have had any beginning or existence at all: that is, the formation of the world was not the effect of chance, but of the power of God.

But in the words of my text, no mention is made of creation, or of any subject of a restrained, limited nature, unless God be such. *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was*
with

with God, and the Word was God. Here then we are most certain, that beginning signifies the beginning of time; but in *Genesis* it is otherwise; for there it plainly signifies the beginning of the world. Which terms are by no means to be confounded; for we cannot suppose this world to have been of the first of God's works; the angels, or other glorious beings unknown to us, having probably received their existence almost an infinite number of ages before the foundations of the earth were laid; when, as we read in the book of *Job*, *the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy*. Upon the whole, I see nothing that can weaken my first conclusion, sc. *whatever existed at, or before, the beginning must have existed before all time, that is, from all eternity*.

In the next place, let us consider who or what it is, that St. *John* here affirms to have had this eternal existence. It is called *the Word*, and declared to be *God*; whether a person distinct from the person of the father, or an attribute only of the father; and whether, if a real person, it be truly God, or a Creature only, deserves the most serious consideration.

That we are to understand by *the Word*,
a real

a real person distinct from the person of the father, and not an attribute only, as the *Sabbellians* would have it, is clear from several reasons; I shall mention one or two. St. John tells us, *the Word was God*: Had he expressed himself thus, the Word was *divine*, there might have been some pretence for understanding the evangelist as speaking of a divine attribute, quality, power, or operation; but in saying, *the Word was God*, which is a personal character, he has plainly intimated, that he was describing a real person. But if by the *Word* be meant a real person, we are very certain it must be a person distinct from the person of the Father. *The Word was with God and the Word was God*: Now that the inspired penman could drop such an expression as this *God the Father was with God the Father*, no good Christian will be brought to believe.

Again, the Word is represented in the reverse of this chapter as the *only begotten of the Father*: And if it be objected, that we have no certain knowledge of what is meant by the generation or begetting of the Word; yet thus much we certainly know; "that if begotten may be a proper expression concerning an attribute or property, yet only begotten is not unless God has no more attributes than one.

Last

Lastly, from an expression of the same apostle, we are not only taught that the Word is a Person, but are further inform'd who the person is that is called the Word, sc. the Lamb, the Christ, the Saviour of the world: *His name* (saith St. John) *is called the Word of God.*

We have seen then, that St. John means by the *Word* a real Person, not the person of the Father, but of the Christ, the Son of God; therefore the *Sabellian* notion is contrary to scripture, as it confounds the two persons in one. We have seen also that this *Word*, or *Son of God*, had a Being in the beginning of time, before any creature existed, before all time, or from all eternity: and therefore the *Socinian's* notion is likewise false, who (if there are any such) asserts, that Christ had no Being, but what he received in the womb of his mother. Let us see in the last place, whether the *Arian's* notion too be not capable of a clear confutation, whose heresy, as it comes nearer the truth, is the more likely to deceive.

The *Arians* are ready to admit that the *Word*, or *Son*, is a real Person; that he was before the creation of the world; that he is God, but an inferior god, infinitely inferior to the supreme God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Whether this be not confront-

ing the scripture doctrine of Christ's divinity, and St. John's account of this matter in particular, remains to be considered.

In the beginning was the Word. St. John does not say, *In the beginning God created the Word*; this would have made him a finite Being: not is this term, as I have observ'd before, set with any subject of a limited nature; which might have induc'd us to think the apostle us'd it in a limited sense. But the *Word* was in the beginning *absolutely*, which, as I have shewn before, must signifie in the beginning of time, or a true and proper eternity. Now if the *Word* or *Son* be an eternal Being, he must be God in the highest sense, as eternity is applicable to none but the true God. And yet our adversaries themselves do not deny his eternity, tho' they seem afraid to acknowledge it. Hear the author of scripture doctrine upon this point. ^a *The scripture, (saith he) in declaring the Son's derivation from the Father, never makes mention of any limitation of time; but always supposes and affirms him to have existed with the Father from the beginning, and before all ages. They therefore have justly been censur'd who taking upon them to be wise above*

^a Prop. 15 and 16.

what is written, and intruding into things which they have not seen, have presum'd to affirm, that there was a time, when the Son was not.

There are other proofs of Christ's eternity alledged upon this occasion; tho' I think this one text of St. John sufficient. The prophet Micah has a famous passage relating to this head. ^a *Thou Bethlem Ephratah, tho' thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me, that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.*

In many places of the *Revelations* he is, stil'd the *Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last*. And the Father is describ'd in the same manner, in divers places of scripture. For instance, *Rev. 21. 6. I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End.* Again, *Isai. 44. 6. Thus saith the Lord the King of Israel, and his Redeemer the Lord of Hosts; I am the First and I am the Last*: And the like is to be seen in other passages of this book. Now if these words are always expressive of a true and proper eternity, when they relate to the person of the Father, what reason can be given, why they should constantly lose their

^a Mic. 5. 2.

significancy, when applied to the person of the Son?

As the eternity of the Son is the only attribute mention'd in my text, I shall not endeavour to prove his divinity from his Omniscience, Omnipresence and other divine attributes, which are ascribed to him both in the Old and New testament; but shall rather confine myself for the present to the assertion of the evangelist. *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.* Here are two persons, the Father and Son, each in the same verse stiled God. That the Father is so called in the strict and proper sense is undoubtedly true: but with regard to the Son, it seems, it must be otherwise: he can be so, only in a low fictitious improper sense. As kings and magistrates are sometimes stiled gods on account of their dominion and sovereignty; so "the reason why the Son is stiled God is not, we are told, so much on account of his metaphysical nature, how divine soever, as of his divine authority over us." But the apostle tells us he was *God in the beginning*, before he could have any divine authority over us; because before the creation. It is plain therefore that the Son is not here stiled God, as princes have
some-

Sometimes been, on account of dominion. Neither could he be so called from acting as God's Vicegerent, or representative in the world; when the world had not as yet a Being. To suppose these things is to suppose what is utterly impossible. And had St. *John* intended to be understood as speaking of an inferior person, would he not have explain'd himself, to prevent a mistake in a point of so great concernment? How shall an author be understood by the most judicious person living, if one word in the same sentence is to be taken in two senses quite different from each other, without the least intimation given of any change of the ideas at all?

But if St. *John* has not in this verse intimated any inferiority in the Son; hath he not in other passages taught his inequality to the Father? The contrary will appear from his own interpretation of scripture. In the beginning of 6 chap. *Isai.* we read thus, *I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims, — And one cried to another, and said, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried. Then said I, Wo is me, for I am undone, —*
for

for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts. Is this the description of a creature of a nominal god? or is it the glory of the true God, the King of kings and Lord of lords? He is seen sitting upon a throne, supreme in Heaven, attended by the seraphic choir, who proclaim aloud his great power and glory. He is likewise stiled the *Jehovah*, which we translate, *the Lord*, and *the Lord of hosts*, which is of the same signification with *Lord God Almighty*. All which plainly proves that the prophet is here speaking of the true God. Now St. *John* tells us, this glory was the glory of Christ: ^a *These things said Esaias when he saw his (Christ's) glory, and spake of him, that is of Christ.* According to St. *John* therefore, the glory and majesty of the Son is equal to the glory and majesty of the Father, the Son is *Jehovah* and Lord of hosts as well as the Father.

There is another passage in St. *John*, besides this, where he speaks of the Son under the title of *Jehovah*. In *Zec.* 12. 10. the Lord or *Jehovah* is introduc'd by the prophet speaking thus; *they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced*; which the evangelist thus ap

^a Joh. 12. 4.

lies to Christ; *Another scripture saith* (name-
of Christ) *they shall look on Him whom they*
have pierced.

The word *Jehovah*, it is well known, signi-
fies eternal, immutable necessary existence. It
is the highest and most awful of all titles:
the *Jews* are said to have had so great veneration
for the name, that they durst not pre-
sume to utter it. Nay it is observable, that
God himself insists upon his title of *Jehovah*,
to shew His superiority to the heathen gods,
in numberless passages of the old testament:
I will mention a few of them. ^a *I am the Lord*
(Jehovah) that is my name, and my glory will
not give to another. ^b *Against all the gods of*
Egypt I will execute Judgment I am the Lord
(Jehovah) ^c *who hath told it from time to time?*
have not I the Lord (Jehovah) and there is no
God else besides me a just God, and a Saviour
there is none besides me. ^d *I am the Lord (Je-*
hovah) the God of all flesh, is there any thing
too hard for me? ^e *I am the Lord (Jehovah) I*
change not. ^f *I am the Lord (Jehovah) and there*
is none else; I form the light and create darkness
— I the Lord (Jehovah) do all these things. The
word Jehovah therefore being peculiarly ex-

^a *Isai. 42. 8.* ^b *Exod. 12. 12.* ^c *Isai. 45. 21.* ^d — *32. 21.*
Mal. 3. 6. ^f *Isai. 45. 6, 7.*

pressive of the superiority of the true God, to all nominal deities ; what could St. *John* mean by ascribing the name to Christ, but to shew that Christ is possess'd of the powers and perfections of the Godhead ; that he is no nominal or inferior Deity, but “^a of one substance with the Father, the very and eternal God ?”

Besides, it is clear, from other parts of this Gospel, that St. *John* could not be suppos'd to divest the son of any divine attribute ; but when he ascribed to him the divine name, suppos'd him possessed of all the divine perfections implied in it. He hath recorded this saying of Christ, ^b *all things that the Father hath are mine*. And, ^c *all mine are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them.* St. *John*, we see, ascribes all perfections without exception, to the ever blessed Son of God, considers his Saviour as truly and essentially God.

Tho' I cannot but think what has been already offered sufficient to convince any unprejudiced man, that the second Person in the Trinity is truly God ; yet I would not omit one argument more, which this same apostle has furnished us with, to prove the divine nature of Christ ; I mean the argument drawn

^a Art. 2. ^b Joh. 16. 15. ^c — 17. 10.

from his being the universal creator. 'Tis St. Paul's assertion, ^a *he that built all things is God*. But St. John tells us, ^b *all things were made by the Son, and without him was not any thing made that was made*. According to a famous passage of St. Paul, ^c *by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him. And he is before all things, and by him all things consist*. I shall not make any use of this text against the Sabellian or Socinian principles; tho' the personality and pre-existence of the Son are plainly deducible from hence. But I would desire any unprejudic'd person to consider the words with attention, and ask himself, whether he finds any where in scripture greater things spoken of the Father, than are here spoken of the Son. *All things were created by him; not only the things in earth, but the things in heaven, the highest order of Beings, those great and glorious spirits that approach the nearest in power to God himself, whether they be angels or arch-angels, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities,*

^a Heb. 3. 4. ^b — 1. 3. ^c Coloss. 1. 16, 17.

or powers, all things were created by him, and for him; for his pleasure they are and were created. Nor were they only created by him, but depend upon him too, by him all things consist in him we live, move and have our being. He is the creator, sustainer, and preserver of every creature in the universe, and whether this can be said of a creature, let any man of common discernment judge.

If our adversaries will criticize upon the word *by*, and contend, that tho' St. John says all things were made *by* the Son, he does not mean, that the Son made all things: I would refer them to *Heb. 1.* *Unto the Son he* (the royal Psalmist) *saith, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever. — Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thy hands: They shall perish, but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vestment shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed, but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.*

Upon the whole then St. John has taught us either expressly, or by way of implication, that the Son is the eternal God; the *Jehovah*; the *Lord of hosts* or *Lord God Almighty*; that he has all the attributes, powers, and perfection

of God; that he is the creator of all things without exception: and if after all, men will presume to ungod their Saviour, or make a creature of their Creator; — However, *judge not that ye be not judged: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block, or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.*

This reminds me of the censures in the *Athanasian Creed*: but to prepare the way to that point, it may be proper to consider, how far we are required to assent to the doctrine which I have taken upon me to defend.

I will suppose no one, who calls himself a Christian, will deny the necessity of faith in order to salvation. The only question therefore, is, What kind of faith is necessary? Or what are we required to believe, if we expect the privileges of a Christian, if we hope for the salvation which Christ has purchased for us? Now if any kind of faith is necessary, certainly the faith or profession into which we are baptized is of that nature. But we are baptized into the profession of Christ's divinity, as appears from a view of the institution of baptism.

The commission to baptize, which was given by Christ himself, runs in these words; *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them*
in

in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Here is plainly a distinction of persons, otherwise the words must be taken in such a sense as this, *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Father, and of the Father.* Could an inspired writer put such language into the mouth of the author of our salvation?

We have therefore dedicated ourselves, as required, by a most solemn act *ἐν ὀνόματι*, *in the name*, to the honour and service of three persons, *the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.* Can any good reason be given, why the same outward act should not have the same respect to the Three Persons? why the Son, for instance, has not a claim to divine honours, as well as the Father? why the Son is not apparently God, as well as the Father? Do the words seem to require a different construction? *Father* and *Son*, surely, are words clearly expressing a sameness of nature, in a distinction of persons; which is all we contend for. Subordination in the Son, is readily admitted, but no inferiority of nature. As amongst men a son is not inferior to his father, but receives from him his human nature, and all the advantages of it; so the Son of God, by

an eternal generation, is invested with all the perfections of the Deity, as he is truly and essentially divine.

The words then, considered in themselves, do most naturally and obviously appear in that sense which the Catholicks put upon them. But were they otherwise understood by the ancients? We are assured they were not, by another of undoubted veracity, who *has traced*, as he tells us, *the sentiments of the earliest writers upon this head*; and who has even been reproached, for having been too conversant in their writings. I might add from the same great man, as also from the author of the antiquities of the Christian church, *that it was a known custom of the primitive church, to require the candidates for baptism, first to make a solemn renunciation of idolatry, and false worship, under the general title of the devil and all his pomps, &c. and then immediately after, to profess their faith in, and adherence to, God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*. And we are further informed from both these authors, that *in the primitive times, the catechumens were instructed in the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, previously to baptism*.

But if, against the plain sense, and meaning of the words, and the authority of the ancients,

cients, any man will contend that the Son of God is a creature still, notwithstanding his being joined with the Father in this solemn manner, without the least hint or intimation of any inferiority of nature; he would do well to consider the consequence of such error. If we could suppose *God* and a *creature* unite in such a solemn act, for receiving mankind as their disciples and subjects, how shocking would be the consequence of such a supposition? Creature-worship would be hereby established upon scripture, when the main drift of scripture is to preclude it.

But how cogent soever the proof of Christ's divinity is, which is drawn from the form of baptism, I need not, I presume, insist on it here; having already, if I mistake not, clearly shewn, if scripture be true and words have any meaning, that we have the greatest reason to believe the second Person in the Trinity to be of the same divine nature with the first. It is sufficient for my purpose, after what has been said, that this text is capable of that sense, wherein the Catholics understand it. If the doctrine be not *contradicted*, it is *confirmed* by it. Nothing less can be meant, than our vowing all obedience to the Holy Trinity, when we take upon us the profession of christianity.

Christianity. But belief is an act of obedience itself; and therefore we are not at liberty to refuse our assent to such truths as God has thought fit to reveal. When our Saviour gave his disciples their commission to baptize, and to preach the gospel, he adds, *“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but, he that believeth not, shall be damned.”* It appears here from Christ’s own words, that the belief of the gospel is necessary to salvation. *Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, &c.* Now as the writings of the apostles must have the same influence over us, as their preaching had upon *those* who lived in their days, we are as much bound to believe what we are taught in this way, as they were to believe what was taught in the other. If therefore we find Christ’s divinity plainly taught in the sacred writings, — let us leave the men, who oppose this article, to make the inference.

But they will tell us, *They have not been able, after the most diligent and exact inquiries they could possibly make, to find any such doctrine in scripture, as we talk of seeing so clearly there;*

and therefore they are not sensible of any danger in being of a different opinion from us ; but on the contrary they object, that it is a dangerous rashness in us to censure, as to their everlasting state, those whom the scripture hath not censured.

In answer to this, They ought to be well assur'd, that they have made this inquiry, before they presume to reject the article. They ought to be thoroughly satisfied, that they have consulted the scriptures carefully and with an unbiaſſed mind ; and that they have used such helps and assistances as are necessary for understanding them. If, without consulting scripture at all upon the case, they form a scheme to themselves, which they are resolved not to give up : or if they look only upon a few texts that seem to speak for the subordination of the Son, (which no sound Catholick denies) and conclude from thence, he must be inferior to the Father, as a creature is inferior to God ; without consulting other parts of scripture, for instance, the writings of St. John which plainly prove him to be the Eternal the Almighty God, the *Jehovah*, the Creator of all things without exception : or lastly, before this pretended inquiry they have taken upon them to determine the manner of God's existence, and rashly judged, *It must be so,*

impossible it should be otherwise, and nothing shall convince me: I say in either of these cases, the doctrine may not appear conspicuous. But if we wilfully shut our eyes, and then complain we cannot see the objects that others are delighted with, 'tis plain we are very unkind to ourselves. However if there should be a case as I first stated it; if a man sincerely, without prejudice, and with all possible helps, endeavours to find the true meaning of scripture, in order to become wise unto salvation; and cannot satisfy himself, that this is a scripture doctrine, it would be matter of surprise to me, but not of censure.

Indeed I should think myself culpable, if I took upon me to judge of the everlasting state of any particular person, that differed from me in points however essential. With regard to myself, I know and am persuaded, that the point I am upon is not matter of speculation, but of the highest importance. If the Son of God be a divine person, (that is, if he be the Son of God) he has a right to divine honours, and a robbery here will be sacrilegious. If the Son of God be not a divine person, (that is again if he be not the Son of God) he has no right to divine honour; and if I pay that honour to him which

is due to the Father alone, I am guilty of Idolatry. Here is no room for a neutrality. It is a very weighty point, and must determine me one way or other. The evidence for the truth of the article is answerable to the importance of it. When I consult the scriptures upon the case, I am told the second person in the Holy Trinity is *the only-begotten Son of God, is God, is the eternal God, is the Lord of hosts, is the Jehovah, is the creator, sustainer and preserver of every Being in the universe* — and can I possibly doubt of his divinity or withhold that adoration which is due to God?

With regard to others, I know how a man may be saved, if I know not how he must be saved. I know, if a man believes and obeys the gospel, he shall be saved. I know of no other terms of salvation offered to mankind and therefore it would argue a want of charity to be silent about a matter of so great and general concern; and not rather to intreat men, that they would not stand out against conviction; that they would lay aside pride and prejudice, and *receive with meekness the ingrafted Word which is able to save their souls*. However, if they should still persist in the error — I should think it uncharitable and unbecom-

becoming in me to exclude a man from the
 mercy of God, when it is not possible for me
 to know what disadvantages he may have la-
 boured under; how far, or for what reasons
 providence may have suffered his understand-
 ing to be darkened, or his judgment de-
 praved.

Such a behaviour is (if I mistake not) re-
 commended by the practice of our Church;
 which in the *Athanasian* Creed, doth not, as
 far as I can learn, warrant her members to
 reprobate any particular person of *Antitri-*
nitarian principles. The censures in this Creed
 are no more then general propositions, like
 to what we find in scripture, declaring the
 necessity of a true faith in order to salva-
 tion. And the use of them, as I take it, is
 to raise that attention in mankind which is
 due to a case of the greatest concernment;
 to excite to a diligent and faithful examina-
 tion of God's holy will; to make us throw off
 all prejudice, and judge with prudence and
 caution, (I may add with *reverence* too) as of
 a point which is declared so nearly to affect
 our everlasting salvation. But let us examine
 these several censures, that we may see how
 far they are liable to such construction.

The

The first censures we meet with, are in the beginning of the *Athanasian Creed*: *Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary, that he hold the Catholick faith: Which faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.* These are plainly "no more then general propositions like to what we find in scripture declaring the necessity of a true faith in order to salvation." It is St. Paul's command (and therefore undoubtedly necessary) that we should, *"Hold fast the form of sound words."* It is Christ's declaration, *He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.*

Before we meet with another censure, we have a particular account of what we are required to believe concerning the divine nature; the sum of which is this, that there are Three divine persons in One undivided substance. I have not indeed insisted on the divinity of the Holy Ghost, (being otherwise so much straiten'd in time, that I have been forc'd to omit many material proofs of the divinity of Christ:) but however where the divinity of the Son is admitted, the divinity of

the Holy Ghost follows easily and naturally enough. Therefore if the Son be proved a distinct person from the Father, and yet of the same divine nature with the Father, it follows, that this doctrine in the Creed is no other than scripture doctrine.

We are now come to another censure, (if this can be so called) *He therefore that will be saved must thus think of the Trinity.* There is indeed a seeming harshness in this clause, according to our translation; but it is not so in the original, where the words are these: *Qui vult ergo salvus esse, ita de Trinitate sentiat.* Whosoever therefore is willing to be saved, let him thus think of the Trinity. So that this is no censure, but a kind direction to a man, who is willing and desirous, to know the terms of salvation.

The next point that offers in the Creed is the incarnation of Christ. *Furthermore, it is necessary to everlasting salvation, that (a man) should believe rightly the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.* A general proposition too, not unlike this of St. John, ^a *Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God. And*

^a 1 Joh. 4. 2, 3.

every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God; and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof you have heard that it should come, and even now already is in the world.

The following explanation of this article is perfectly agreeable to scripture, and undeniable upon the established principle that *Christ is God*. We are now come to the conclusion of the Creed: *This is the Catholick faith, which except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved.* This is the Catholick, the true faith, the real doctrine of scripture touching the Deity; sc. that *there are Three distinct persons in One undivided substance; and that the Second person in this ever glorious Trinity was incarnate, (the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us) and suffered for our salvation.* This is, in brief, the doctrine contained in the *Athanasian Creed*, intirely founded on the word of God. And if so, a man will make this conclusion for his own sake, *except I believe the doctrine, I cannot be saved.*

Yet I will humbly presume, the church do not make this inference, how just soever: taking this excellent form into her service she hath shewn the greatest caution and tenderness. She hath guarded us against any un-
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ound opinions touching the nature of the Godhead, by bringing the danger of these false notions so near us, that if we only open our eyes we cannot avoid seeing it: here she stops. — When she hath shewn us our danger, she doth not, if we hesitate, immediately plunge us into misery, or cut us off from all hopes of salvation, but warns us to flee from the wrath to come. Thus, in the beginning of the Creed we are told, that without a right faith a man cannot be saved: we are further told, that the belief of Christ's divinity is the right faith: this is sufficient to shew us the importance of the article. She doth not therefore draw a conclusion, which might give offence through an excessive severity, but like a kind and faithful monitor concludes thus: *whosoever therefore willing to be saved, let him thus think. Who- ever is desirous to obtain salvation, let him, or would advise him to take this way.*

Thus here in the conclusion, the same caution, care and tenderness appears as we have seen in the beginning; that is, we are again told what faith every Christian ought to profess; sc. that *there are Three distinct persons in the Godhead, but One sameness of nature, and that the Word was made flesh; this is the Catholic faith.* We are also reminded, in general
seems

seems still, of the importance and necessity of holding the Catholick or true faith, *which faith except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved*. How natural soever a conclusion might follow, the church has not made it explicit, but leave it to every man's conscience to make the proper application; she only desires that "men" "would take warning of their danger, and" "wisely avoid it." Concluding the Creed, as it begun, with a general declaration touching the necessity of a right faith, *Which Catholick* (or true) *faith* (for so I understand the connection, keeping to the first general proposition *whosoever will be saved, &c.* and dropping the explanatory part :) *except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved*. "Except a man believe" "honestly and faithfully the Catholick faith" "or the word of God, he cannot be saved." Such general propositions can give no offence to the most cautious man living. — There is therefore no offensive harshness in this Creed when rightly understood, but an excellent preservative against the dangerous tenets of some unhappy men. — And if any man of superabundant charity can dislike such general propositions, on account of their seeming severity, I will venture to affirm, there is as much, if not more, reason for him to dislike

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great part of the bible. Give me leave to observe again that it was highly useful and expedient to conclude with such a proposition; that men might not think it a matter of indifference, whether they believed thus or otherwise; but should reflect on the importance of the doctrine and behave accordingly. — So great hath been the care and moderation of the church: her care to preserve the primitive faith whole and undefiled, by shewing the importance of it; her moderation in not condemning particular persons unhappily rejecting it.

What remains, but that we all strive to imitate her example, to follow these salutary directions, and *so fulfill the will of Christ*; in a word, that we make it our particular care to preserve our morals uncorrupt as our faith is pure. To which end let us devoutly pray, that *the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost be with us all evermore.* Amen.

F I N I S.



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XXXIX Articuli Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ, textibus Sacr. Script. & Patrum priorum Testimoniis confirmati, brevibusque Notis illustrati. Adjectis in præter Nominibus Auctorum locisque in quibus Doctrina in Articulis contentius explicatur. Auctore Edw. Welchman Archidiacono Cardigan.

Xenophontis Memorabilium Socratis Dictorum Libri IV, Græcè & Latine, cum notis Integris Ernesti aliorumque selectis; nunc variis etiam novis observationibus adæucti & illustrati. Huic Editioni accedunt Capitulum, Verborum & Phrasium Indices locupletissimi.

Xenophontis de Cyri Expedit. Lib. Septem. Græca recognovit, cum Codicibus MSSis & omnibus fere Libris editis contulit, plurimis in locis emendavit, Versionem Lat. reformavit, observat. suis, Tabula Geographica & Indice Geographico auxit & illustravit; Notas Hen. Stephani, Leunclavii, Æ. Porti & Mureti recensitas & castigatas, & Variant. Lectionum delectum, adjunxit Thomas Hutchinson, 8vo Edit. 2da.

Reflections on the natural Foundation of the high Antiquity of Government, Arts, and Sciences in Egypt.

Platonis Dialogi Quinque Gr. Lat. Recensuit, notisque illustravit Nath. Forster A. M. Coll. Corp. Christi Oxon. Socius.

Appendix Liviana, continens I. Selectas Codicum MSS. & Editionum antiquarum Lectiones, præcipuas Variorum Emendationes, & Supplementa lacunarum in iis T. Livii qui supersunt Libris. II. J. Freinsheimii Supplementorum Libros X. in locum Decadis secundæ Livianæ deperditæ. In usum studentium Academicæ.

The first part of a new Edition of the Hebrew Bible without Points, containing the Pentateuch, by N. Forster, B.D. Fellow of C. C. C. Proposals with a Specimen may be seen at J. and P. Knapton's in London, W. Thurlbourn's at Cambridge. N.B. The three remaining Parts will be carried on with all proper Expedition, and publish'd together as soon as the whole is finish'd.

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The Itinerary of John Leland the Antiquary, in nine Volumes, publish'd from the Original MS. in the Bodleian Library, by Thomas Hearne A. M. The Second Edition: Collated and Improved from the Original MS. with the Addition of a General Index.

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